

What is claimed is:

1 1. A communication system comprising:
2 a plurality of user terminals connected to a communication
3 network, and
4 a communication server connected to said communication
5 network, wherein:
6 said communication server, when a chat start event has
7 occurred, causes a chat to be started at a prescribed timing
8 among those user terminals, out of said plurality of user
9 terminals, related in advance to said chat start event.

1 2. The communication system, as claimed in Claim 1,
2 wherein:
3 said communication server, when a chat end event has
4 occurred, causes said chat to end at a prescribed timing among
5 said plurality of user terminal.

1 3. The communication system, as claimed in Claim 2,
2 wherein:
3 said communication server is further provided with a buddy list
4 generating/updating unit, wherein:
5 said buddy list generating/updating unit, when
6 said chat start event has occurred, generates a buddy list
7 information which relates the users of said plurality of user
8 terminals to one another as buddies, transmits it to said
9 plurality of user terminal at a prescribed timing and, when said
10 chat end event has occurred, said buddy list generating/updating
11 unit transmits to said plurality of user terminals at a prescribed
12 timing buddy list delete information for deleting said buddy
13 list information transmitted to said plurality of user terminals.

1 4. The communication system, as claimed in Claim 3,
2 wherein:

3 each of said user terminals is provided with a filtering
4 unit for referencing said buddy list information for users
5 available for said chat and selecting users available for
6 chatting out of the users represented by said buddy list
7 information.

1 5. The communication system, as claimed in Claim 1,
2 wherein:

3 said communication server registers, out of the users of
4 said plurality of user terminals, users each having made a call
5 to a prescribed telephone number within a predetermined span
6 of time as the users of user terminals related to said chat start
7 event.

1 6. The communication system, as claimed in Claim 1,
2 wherein:

3 said communication server registers, out of the users of
4 said plurality of user terminals, users each having transmitted
5 an e-mail to a prescribed e-mail address within a predetermined
6 span of time by using their respective user terminals as the
7 users of user terminals related to said chat start event.

1 7. The communication system, as claimed in Claim 1,
2 wherein:

3 said communication server registers, out of the users of
4 said plurality of user terminals, users having bought electronic
5 tickets within a predetermined span of time from a prescribed

6 web site by using their respective user terminals as the users
7 of user terminals related to said chat start event.

1 8. The communication system, as claimed in Claim 1,
2 wherein:

3 said communication server registers users present in
4 predetermined positions as the users of user terminals related
5 to said chat start event.

1 9. The communication system, as claimed in Claim 1,
2 wherein:

3 said communication server is provided with a group
4 organizing unit for receiving an e-mail distributed to said
5 plurality of user terminal, and

6 said group organizing unit, upon receiving said e-mail,
7 perceives the occurrence of said chat start event.

1 10. The communication system, as claimed in Claim 1,
2 wherein:

3 said communication server is provided with a group
4 organizing unit which, when an e-mail is received from the user
5 terminal of a specific user out of said plurality of user terminals,
6 perceives the occurrence of said chat start event.

1 11. The communication system, as claimed in Claim 2,
2 wherein:

3 said communication server is provided with an end event
4 detecting unit which detects the ending time after the lapse
5 of a set length of time from the point of time when said chat
6 start event occurred, and

7 said end event detecting unit, when it detects said ending
8 time, perceives said chat end event.

1 12. The communication system, as claimed in Claim 1,
2 wherein:

3 said communication server is provided with a presence
4 information database in which is registered presence information
5 indicating whether or not the users of said user terminals are
6 accessible, and

7 a group organizing unit which references said presence
8 information database and perceives the occurrence of said chat
9 start event when said presence information of a specific user
10 out of the respective users of said plurality of user terminals
11 indicates accessibility.

1 13. The communication system, as claimed in Claim 2,
2 wherein:

3 said communication server is provided with a presence
4 information database in which is registered presence information
5 indicating whether or not the users of said user terminals are
6 accessible, and

7 a group organizing unit which references said presence
8 information database and perceives the occurrence of said chat
9 end event when said presence information of a specific user out
10 of the respective users of said plurality of user terminals
11 indicates inaccessibility.

1 14. The communication system, as claimed in Claim 1,
2 wherein:

3 said communication server is provided with a group

4 organizing unit which perceives the occurrence of said chat start
5 event when a predetermined first point of time has come.

1 15. The communication system, as claimed in Claim 2,
2 wherein:

3 said communication server is provided with an end event
4 detecting unit which perceives the occurrence of said chat end
5 event when a predetermined second point of time has come.

1 16. The communication system, as claimed in Claim 2,
2 wherein:

3 said communication server is provided with an end event
4 detecting unit which perceives the occurrence of said chat end
5 event if, after the lapse of a set length of time since messages
6 were transmitted/received among said plurality of user terminals,
7 no transmission/reception of messages takes place again among
8 said plurality of user terminals.

1 17. A communication server connected to a plurality of
2 user terminals via a communication network, comprising:

3 a presence information database in which are registered
4 an identifier by which each of said plurality of user terminals
5 identifies itself and related information,

6 a group organizing unit which, when a chat start event
7 has occurred, references said presence information database and
8 selects, out of the identifiers of said plurality of user
9 terminals, identifier of which said related information relates
10 to said chat start event, and

11 a buddy list generating/updating unit which transmits
12 chat start information to user terminals matched to identifiers

13 relating to said start event out of said plurality of user
14 terminals, wherein:

15 said chart start information is an item of information
16 to cause a chat to start at a prescribed timing among said plurality
17 of user terminals.

1 18. The communication server, as claimed in Claim 17,
2 further provided with:

3 a buddy list information database, wherein:

4 said buddy list generating/updating unit generates buddy
5 list information to relate as buddies to one another the users
6 of said plurality of user terminals matching said plurality of
7 identifiers selected by said group organizing unit, registers
8 it in said buddy list information database, and transmits said
9 buddy list information, together with said chart start
10 information, to said plurality of user terminals.

1 19. The communication server, as claimed in Claim 18,
2 further provided with:

3 an end event detecting unit which perceives chat end event,
4 wherein:

5 said buddy list generating/updating unit, when said chat
6 end event has occurred, transmits chat end information to said
7 plurality of user terminals, and

8 said chat end information is an item of information to
9 end said chat at a prescribed timing among said plurality of
10 user terminals.

1 20. The communication server, as claimed in Claim 19,

2 wherein:

3 said end event detecting unit, when it has perceived said
4 chat end event, deletes said buddy list information registered
5 in said buddy list information database, and generates buddy
6 list delete information to delete said buddy list information
7 transmitted to said plurality of user terminals, and
8 said buddy list generating/updating unit transmits said
9 buddy list delete information, together with said chat end
10 information, to said plurality of user terminals.

1 21. The communication server, as claimed in Claim 17,
2 wherein:

3 users having called a prescribed telephone number within
4 a predetermined span of time by using their respective user
5 terminals, out of said plurality of user terminals, are further
6 registered as the users of user terminals related to said chat
7 start event.

1 22. The communication server, as claimed in Claim 17,
2 wherein:

3 users having transmitted e-mails to a prescribed e-mail
4 address within a predetermined span of time by using their
5 respective user terminals, out of said plurality of user
6 terminals, are further registered as the users of said user
7 terminals related to said chat start event.

1 23. The communication server, as claimed in Claim 17,
2 wherein:

3 users having bought electronic tickets within a
4 predetermined span of time from a prescribed web site by using
5 their respective user terminals, out of the users of said

6 plurality of user terminals, are further registered as the users
7 of user terminals related to said chat start event.

1 24. The communication server, as claimed in Claim 17,
2 wherein:

3 users present in predetermined positions are further
4 registered as the users of user terminals related to said chat
5 start event,

6 positional information, matched to said identifiers, are
7 further registered in said presence information database,

8 said positional information represents the positions of
9 said user terminals, and

10 said group organizing unit references said presence
11 information database and selects, out of said identifier, said
12 plurality of identifiers whose positions indicated by said
13 positional information relate to said chat start event.

1 25. The communication server, as claimed in Claim 19,
2 wherein:

3 set chat durations, matched to said identifiers, are
4 further registered in said presence information database,

5 said buddy list information includes the ending time, and
6 said ending time represents the point of time at which said chat
7 duration has passed since the starting time of said chat,

8 said end event detecting unit references said buddy list
9 information database and, if said ending time has come, perceives
10 the occurrence of said chat end event, and

11 said buddy list generating/updating unit transmits said
12 chat end information at said ending time to said plurality of
13 user terminals.

1 26. The communication server, as claimed in Claim 17,
2 wherein:

3 presence information, matched to said identifiers, is
4 further registered in said presence information database,
5 said presence information indicates whether or not each
6 of the users of said user terminals is accessible, and
7 said group organizing unit, when said chat start event
8 has occurred, references said presence information database and
9 selects, out of said identifiers, a plurality of identifiers
10 of which said presence information indicates accessibility and
11 said related information relates to said chat start event.

1 27. The communication server, as claimed in Claim 17,
2 wherein:

3 said group organizing unit, when it has received the same
4 e-mail as the e-mail distributed to said plurality of user
5 terminals, perceives the occurrence of said chat start event.

1 28. The communication server, as claimed in Claim 17,
2 wherein:

3 said group organizing unit, when it has received an e-mail
4 from the terminal of a prescribed user, out of the users of said
5 plurality of user terminals, perceives the occurrence of said
6 chat start event.

1 29. The communication server, as claimed in Claim 17,
2 wherein:

3 said presence information database matches said
4 identifiers to said related information and presence information,

5 and said presence information indicates whether or not each of
6 the users of said user terminals is accessible, and
7 said group organizing unit references said presence
8 information database and, when said presence information of a
9 specific user out of the users of said plurality of user terminals
10 indicates accessibility, perceives the occurrence of said chat
11 start event.

1 30. The communication server, as claimed in Claim 19,
2 wherein:
3 said presence information database matches said
4 identifiers to said related information and presence information,
5 and said presence information indicates whether or not each of
6 the users of said user terminals is accessible, and
7 said end event detecting unit references said presence
8 information database and, when said presence information of a
9 specific user out of the users of said plurality of user terminals
10 indicates inaccessibility, perceives the occurrence of said chat
11 end event.

1 31. The communication server, as claimed in Claim 17,
2 wherein:
3 said group organizing unit perceives the occurrence of
4 said chat start event when a predetermined first point of time
5 has come.

1 32. The communication server, as claimed in Claim 19,
2 wherein:
3 said end event detecting unit perceives the occurrence
4 of said chat end event when a predetermined second point of time

5 has come.

1 33. The communication server, as claimed in Claim 19,
2 wherein:

3 said end event detecting unit perceives the occurrence
4 of said chat end event if, after the lapse of a set length of
5 time since messages were transmitted/received among said
6 plurality of user terminals, no transmission/reception of
7 messages takes place again among said plurality of user
8 terminals.

1 34. The communication system provided with a plurality
2 of communication servers claimed in Claim 17, comprising:

3 said plurality of communication servers are mutually
4 accessible via said communication network, and

5 one of said plurality of communication servers
6 communicates with at least one user terminal out of said user
7 terminals via said communication network, and communicates with
8 other user terminals than said at least one user terminal out
9 of said user terminals via said communication network by
10 communicating with other communication servers than said one
11 communication server out of said plurality of communication
12 servers via said communication network.

1 35. A communication method using a communication server
2 connected to a plurality of user terminals via a communication
3 network, comprising the steps of:

4 (a) starting a chat at a prescribed timing, when a chat
5 start event has occurred, among a plurality of user terminals,
6 out of said user terminals, related in advance to said chat start

7 event, and

8 (b) ending said chat at a prescribed timing, when a chat
9 end event has occurred, among said plurality of user terminals.

1 36. The communication method, as claimed in Claim 35,
2 wherein:

3 said (a) further includes generation, when said chat start
4 event has occurred, of buddy list information to mutually relate
5 as buddies the users of said plurality of user terminals, and
6 its transmission at a prescribed timing to said plurality of
7 user terminals, said buddy list information indicating users
8 available for participation in said chat.

1 37. The communication method, as claimed in Claim 35,
2 wherein:

3 said (b) further includes transmission at a prescribed
4 timing, when said chat end event has occurred, of buddy list
5 delete information to said plurality of user terminals to delete
6 said buddy list information transmitted to said plurality of
7 user terminals.

1 38. A computer program for causing communication among
2 user terminals to be executed by using a communication server
3 connected to a plurality of user terminals via a communication
4 network, comprising the steps of:

5 (a) starting a chat at a prescribed timing, when a chat
6 start event has occurred, among a plurality of user terminals,
7 out of said user terminals, related in advance to said chat start
8 event, and

9 (b) ending said chat at a prescribed timing, when a chat

10 end event has occurred, among said plurality of user terminals.

1 39. The computer program, as claimed in Claim 38, wherein:
2 said (a) further includes generation, when said chat start
3 event has occurred, of buddy list information to mutually relate
4 as buddies the users of said plurality of user terminals, and
5 its transmission at a prescribed timing to said plurality of
6 user terminals, said buddy list information indicating users
7 available for participation in said chat.

1 40. The computer program, as claimed in Claim 38, wherein:
2 said (b) further includes transmission at a prescribed
3 timing, when said chat end event has occurred, of buddy list
4 delete information to said plurality of user terminals to delete
5 said buddy list information transmitted to said plurality of
6 user terminals.